



# Project Snapshot

February 2017



Central 70, between I-25 and Tower Road, is one of Colorado's economic backbones: home to 1,200 businesses, providing a regional connection to Denver International Airport and carrying upwards of 200,000 vehicles per day. It's time to bring this aging highway into the 21st century and rejoin communities along the way.

The Central 70 Project proposes to reconstruct a 10-mile stretch of I-70 east of downtown, add one new Express Lane in each direction, remove the aging 53-year-old viaduct, lower the interstate between Brighton and Colorado boulevards, and place a 4-acre park over a portion of the lowered interstate by Swansea Elementary School. When completed, the Central 70 Project will reduce congestion, improve safety and better accommodate future growth along this vital transportation corridor.

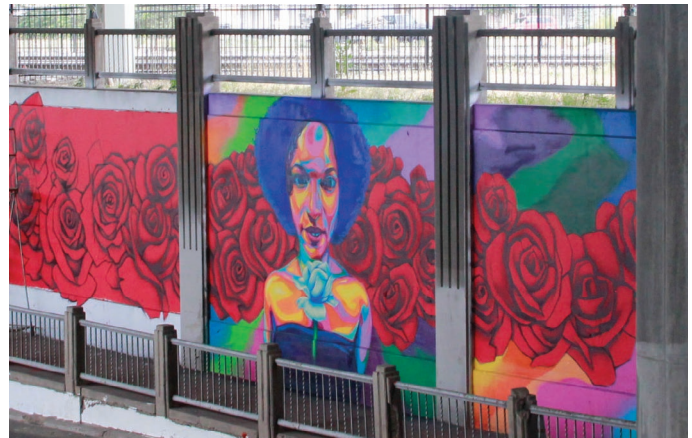
As the state's largest-ever transportation project, Central 70 has taken a long time to develop. The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) considered more than 90 possible alternatives over 14 years of study in close conversations with local residents, businesses and other stakeholders.

The Central 70 Project took a major step forward with the January 2017 issuance of the Record of Decision (ROD) from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Very simply, a ROD identifies what will be built, how it will be paid for and the impacts as a result of the project. It makes specific, legally binding commitments to measures that CDOT and FHWA will take to mitigate impacts during construction and over the long term. It also discusses what FHWA considered when making its determination. The entire document is available on the project website at [central70.codot.gov](http://central70.codot.gov).

## Community Outreach

Central 70 is the result of conversations with thousands of local residents, businesses and other stakeholders, who have participated in CDOT's unprecedented community involvement program. Starting in 2003, the project team has held hundreds of public meetings at the neighborhood and corridor-wide levels, attended local community events, and has gone door-to-door to speak with residents and individuals.

Outreach was conducted in Spanish and English, and included locations in the corridor where neighborhood residents and businesses could interact with the project team. A Community Design Advisory Committee was established to finalize project aesthetics, including identifying the elements of the 4-acre park by Swansea Elementary School.



*In fall 2016, CDOT partnered with two dozen urban artists to transform the aging viaduct into an urban art gallery*

## Above and Beyond Community Commitments

CDOT has identified additional mitigation measures beyond those normally provided on CDOT transportation projects to lessen adverse impacts in the project area. They are legally mandated commitments in the ROD, and must be fully funded as part of the Central 70 Project, and include:

- Air conditioning units and storm windows for certain homes close to the project
- \$2 million contribution toward affordable housing
- \$100,000 provision to help increase access to fresh food

## Meeting Air Quality Standards

The Central 70 Project will meet all health-based air quality standards even with the nearly 50 percent increase in population and increased travel expected by 2040. In addition to studying air quality impacts, CDOT is taking concrete measures to monitor and reduce emissions during the construction period including requiring emission controls on older construction equipment and installing an air quality monitor at Swansea Elementary School.

## Colorado's First Highway Park

Borrowing an idea already in place in many cities across the nation, the lowered portion of I-70 will include a 4-acre park built over the interstate.

This space will feature a small amphitheater, a splash park, a sports field, play areas, and room for farmers markets and community events. These features were selected by community members as a mitigation commitment. The park must be built as part of the project and must include these elements.



*Potential splash park design*



## Public-Private Partnership

In an era of limited transportation funding, CDOT must seek new and innovative ways to deliver the state's needed investments in our transportation infrastructure. Construction of the Central 70 Project will utilize a Design-Build-Finance-Operate-Maintain model. This public-private partnership delivery model transfers risk to a private partner and allows for long-term financing of the project through availability payments - an annual payment to the private partner based on progress and performance.

The High Performance Transportation Enterprise (HPTE) and CDOT have identified four contracting teams as finalists, and they will respond to a final Request for Proposals (RFP) in spring 2017. A private partner will be selected in summer 2017 and construction will begin in early 2018. Additional information on this delivery model along with previous and upcoming outreach events is available on the project website at [central70.codot.gov](http://central70.codot.gov).

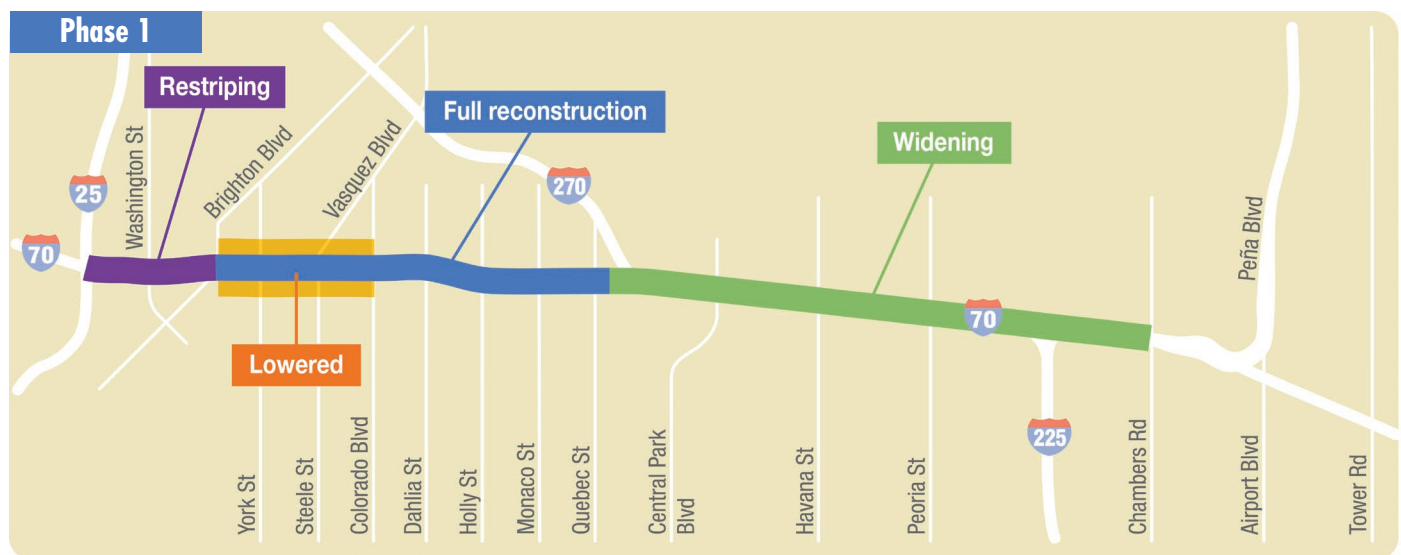
## Project Highlights

- Construction of one new Express Lane in each direction from Brighton Boulevard to Chambers Road
- Removing the 53-year-old viaduct and lowering the interstate between Brighton and Colorado boulevards
- Construction of a new, 4-acre park and public space over the interstate between Clayton and Columbine streets

## Construction Approach

CDOT has developed several requirements to reduce impacts on the traveling public during the construction period and ensure community access. The selected developer must:

- Keep three lanes open in each direction (as exists on I-70 today) during construction
- Maintain north/south pedestrian and vehicle access throughout construction



## Project Benefits

- **Reduces travel time.** The Central 70 Project will reduce travel time through the corridor by one-third to one-half in 2035.
- **Serves population & employment growth.** By 2035, population in the corridor served by I-70 east of Denver is expected to grow by 42 percent and employment is expected to increase by 58 percent. More than 1,200 businesses are located in the corridor today.
- **Addresses the last of state's "30 worst" bridges.** The two-mile long viaduct between Colorado and Brighton boulevards was identified in 2009 as among the state's 30 worst bridges. Constructed in 1964, ongoing repair work has kept this structure safe and functioning years beyond its expected life.
- **Adds modern safety standards.** Redesigned shoulders and interchanges will reduce crashes while improving safety for drivers, pedestrians and the community.

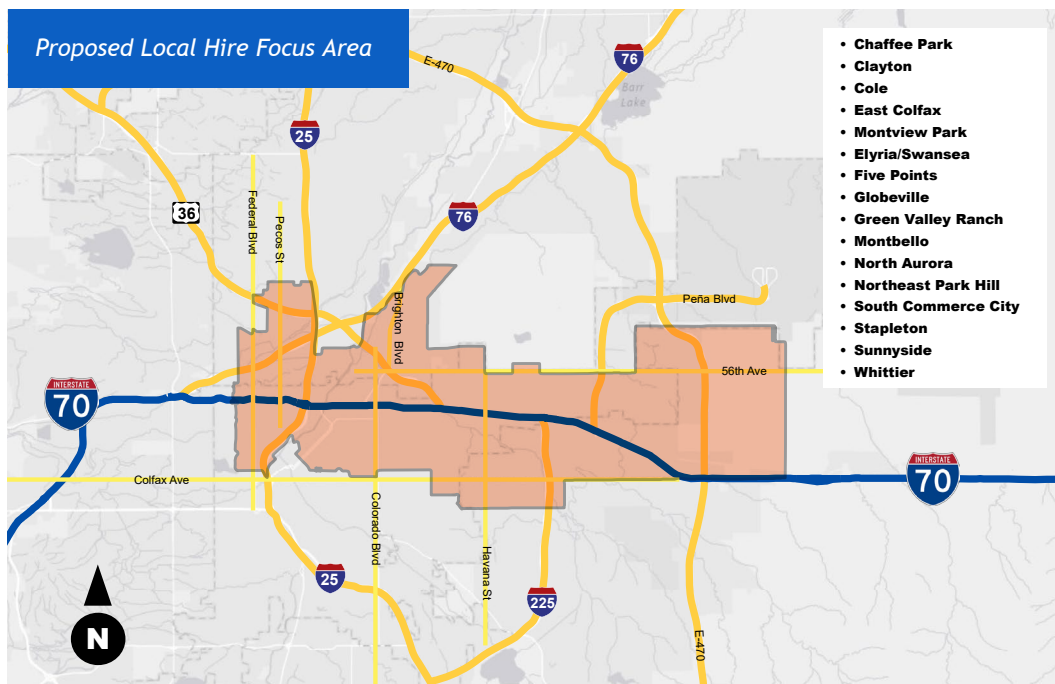
## Bringing Job Opportunities to Local Residents

CDOT will provide training and set hiring goals to enable hundreds of local residents to work on the Central 70 Project, an unprecedented workforce development program supported by a \$400,000 grant from the FHWA. One of only ten pilot projects of this type authorized nationally, Central 70 will focus on hiring in neighborhoods adjacent to I-70 in central Denver and portions of Commerce City and Aurora.

This is the first time a Colorado project has received special permission from FHWA to set local hiring goals, which are normally not allowed for federally funded projects.

Additionally, CDOT will help fund training, recruitment, construction career development, on-the-job training and ensure opportunities for Colorado's small businesses.

"We have heard from the stakeholders the importance of training and hiring workers from the neighborhoods that will be most affected by this project. We are very excited to pilot local hiring goals on this critical project and to pair these goals with training programs. Moreover, we can start these training programs now, before construction starts, so we have a trained workforce ready to hit the ground running," said Tony DeVito, Central 70 Project Director.



## CONTACT INFO

### Central 70 Project

[central70.codot.gov](http://central70.codot.gov)

#### For more information:

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## NEXT STEPS

### January 2017

Record of Decision received, completing I-70 East study process

### February 2017

Pre-final Request for Proposals public meeting and telephone town hall

### Spring 2017

Final Request for Proposals (publicly available)

### Summer 2017

Selection of project developer and award of contract

### 2018

Final design and construction begins